

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

Serving Minnesota's 4th Congressional District

Health Protection Amendment – Health Care Fact Sheet

U.S. Health Care is the Most Inefficient and Underperforming System in the Industrialized World

- The United States spends more on health care than any other industrialized nation, and nearly twice as much per person.¹
- In global comparisons by the World Health Organization, the U.S. ranks below all other major industrialized nations—and on par with the United Arab Emirates—in female life expectancy (33rd), male life expectancy (34th) and infant mortality (36th).²

U.S. Health Care Costs are Skyrocketing

- In 2005, U.S. health care spending totaled \$2 trillion—\$6,697 per person.³ Annual costs are expected to double to \$4 trillion by 2015.⁴
- Health care costs have risen from 13.8 percent of GDP in 1993 to 16 percent in 2004.⁵
- Since 2000, family health premiums have risen by 87 percent, while wage growth has been virtually stagnant.⁶
- 14.3 million Americans spend more than a quarter of their income on medical costs.⁷
- A 2004 Harvard study found that half of all bankruptcy filings were partly the result of medical expenses.⁸

High Numbers of Uninsured Americans Drive Up Overall Health Care Costs

- Nearly 47 million people in America went without health insurance for the entire 2005 calendar year.⁹
- More than 80 million Americans under the age of 65 went without health insurance for at least some part of the 2002 and 2003 calendar years.¹⁰
- The U.S. health care system spends between \$40 billion and \$100 billion per year providing treatment to the uninsured.¹¹
- Premiums for individual health insurance provided through employers are estimated to cost an extra \$341 per year to compensate for the uninsured; family premiums cost an extra \$922.¹²

Americans Want Bold Solutions that Ensure Quality Health Care for All

- Americans rank health care as one of the top two domestic concerns that they want the government to address.¹³
- Fully nine in ten Americans believe that the U.S. health care system needs fundamental changes; 36 percent believe the system needs to be “completely rebuilt.”¹⁴
- 64 percent of Americans support a government guarantee of health coverage for all.¹⁵

¹ “Multinational Comparisons of Health Systems Data, 2005,” The Commonwealth Fund, April 2006

² “World Health Statistics 2006,” World Health Organization, 2006

³ “National Health Spending in 2005,” *Health Affairs* 2007; 26:142-153

⁴ “Health Spending Projections Through 2015: Changes on the Horizon,” *Health Affairs* 2006; 25: w61-w73

⁵ “Record Share Of Economy Is Spent on Health Care,” *Washington Post*, 10 January 2006

⁶ “Employer Health Benefits: 2006 Annual Survey,” Kaiser Family Foundation & Health Research and Educational Trust, September 26, 2006

⁷ “Higher Costs, Less Care; Data Show Crisis In Health Insurance,” *The Washington Post*, September 28, 2004

⁸ “Illness and Injury as Contributors to Bankruptcy,” by David U. Himmelstein, M.D., Elizabeth Warren, J.D., Deborah Thorne, Ph.D. and Steffie Woolhandler, M.D., M.P.H., December 3, 2004

⁹ “Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005,” U.S. Census Bureau, August 2006

¹⁰ “One in Three: Non-elderly Americans Without Health Insurance in 2002-2003,” Families USA, July 2004

¹¹ \$43 billion: “Paying a Premium: The Added Cost of Care for the Uninsured,” Families USA, 2005; \$100 billion: “Hidden Costs, Value Lost: Uninsurance in America,” Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance, The National Academies Press, 2003

¹² “Paying a Premium: The Added Cost of Care for the Uninsured,” Families USA, 2005

¹³ “The Public’s Health Care Agenda for the New Congress and Presidential Campaign,” The Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard School of Public Health, December 2006

¹⁴ “U.S. Health Care Politics,” CBS News/New York Times poll, March 1, 2007

¹⁵ “U.S. Health Care Politics,” CBS News/New York Times poll, March 1, 2007